

# HO

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# Foreword

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute has undertaken a pioneering step in documenting and producing Photo Hand Books on different Schedule Tribes of Odisha including the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups. The present handbook is one such photographic representation of the socio-cultural life of the tribal community known as HO concluding with various planned changes in their present way of life.

The 'Ho' is a Kolarian tribe belonging to the same stock of Munda and Kol. They mainly inhabit the interiors of Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts of Odisha. As per 2001 census, their population in Odisha is 43,133.

The Hos generally live in multiethnic villages in separate hamlets. A typical Ho settlement is conspicuous by the sight of large tombstones commemorating their ancestors at different places of the village. The other landmarks of a typical Ho settlement are *akhara*, the dancing arena at the centre of the village and '*sarana*' the sacred grove of the village deities *Desauli* located at the village outskirts. Like other tribes of Odisha they believe in existence of a number of gods and goddesses, ghosts, spirits, ancestors, witches etc. 'Bonga' is the generic term for all gods and goddesses. *Singa Bonga* or Sun god is their supreme deity.

They are settled agriculturists. Besides, they also depend on food gathering, and seasonal forest collections, animal domestication, hunting and fishing to supplement their livelihood.

In recent times due to multifarious development interventions, both by the Government and Non-government agencies, the Hos are undergoing a phase of transition. But they are struggling hard to retain their time tested values, customs and traditions.

I extend my heartiest thanks to Dr. A.B. Ota, IAS, Director, Shri S.C. Mohanty, OSD (R) SCSTRTI, A. Kodamasingh and N. Kanhar, who have laboriously conceived, and produced this colorful Photo Hand Book. Dr. P. Patnaik, Curator, Smt. Anjali Sahoo, SA also deserve my thanks for rendering editorial assistance for the handbook

I hope this book will be interesting and useful for the researchers, tourists, academicians, laymen and everyone who are inquisitive to know about our tribal brethren as well as understand, admire and appreciate their simplicity and ingenuity.

**(Santosh Sarangi)**  
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# Introduction

The 'Ho' is one of the major tribes of Odisha belonging to the Proto-Austroloid group. The name 'Ho' is derived from the word 'horo' which, in their language, means 'man'. They are the descendants of Munda family. Other neighboring communities address them by the term 'Kola'. But they identify themselves as "Ho". Some of the anthropologists are of opinion that the Ho, Kol, Kolha etc. are offshoots of a common tribal origin.

## Population and Concentration

Hos are mainly inhabited Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj districts of Odisha. But they claim that Chhotanagpur is their place of origin from where they migrated subsequently to Singhbhum, Saraikalla, Kharsuan, Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar.

As per the 2001 census, the total population of Hos in Odisha is 43,133. Between 1991 and 2001 census their population has registered a growth rate of -15.29 percent. Their sex ratio is 982. (per 1000 males). Their rate of literacy is 35.18 percent i.e. 49.64 percent for male and 20.50 percent for female.





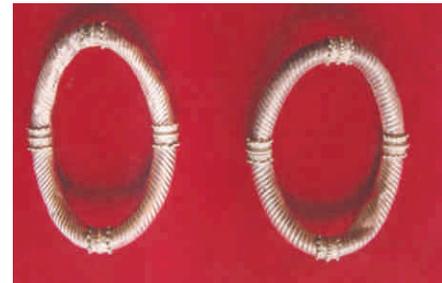
# Socio Cultural Identity

The Hos are renowned for their simple, amiable, and other philanthropic qualities. In the earlier period, this tribe was known for its fighting skills and acumen. The Hos secured their dignity by winning different wars against the kings of Mayurbhanj and Chhotanagpur.

Their language is known as 'Ho' which belongs to Austro-Asiatic language family akin to Santal and Mundarian languages. Besides, most of them are also well conversant with Mundari language and the regional language 'Odia'. In 1934, Shri Lako Bodra had developed the script for HO language known as *warangchichi* that has some similarity with the Devanagari script. Now the Hos have appealed the government to schedule their language and script constitutionally.

So far as their physical characteristics are concerned, they are of short or medium stature, having dark complexion with broad and flat nose, dark brown eyes, straight or wavy black hair, and narrow chin. However they do not possess strong and muscular body features. But, they have sharp intelligence and courage which are evident in their daily life style.





## Dress and Ornaments

The dress pattern and traditional costumes of Hos are very similar to those of Santal, Kol and Kolha tribes. Ho men used to wear a narrow strip of white cloth known as '*batoi*' and women used to wear the '*lunga*', a coarse hand-woven sari. But now due to their frequent contact and migrations to cities, their dress patterns have changed. Ho men, at present, wear modern dresses like trousers, shirts and banyans; and women wear saree with petticoat and blouse. Tattooing is a popular fashion among the Ho women who decorate their bodies with tattoo marks of their own clan. They also adorn themselves with various ornaments like anklets (*anduo*), nose ring (*guna* or *nakafula*), ear-ring (*mukhi*), necklace (*hisir*), bangles (*sakom*) etc. The women prefer to decorate their hair knot with colorful flowers and traditional hairpins.

# Settlement and Housing

Most of the 'Ho' villages are surrounded by mountains and forests. The Hos usually live in multi-ethnic villages amidst other scheduled tribes and scheduled castes. In few cases, they are also found to inhabit uniethnic villages.

Big flat (*domen*) or vertical memorial stones are found near the boundary line of each village. After the dead body is burnt, the charred bone remains are collected in an earthen pot and buried in a pit, the mouth of which is capped by a big flat stone. These are considered gravestones where the ancestors of the clan have been laid to rest. At the centre of the village the dancing ground or akhra is located where villagers gather for meeting and recreational activities usually in the evening. At the village outskirts, lies the sacred grove, 'Sarna' where Desauli -the village deity resides.

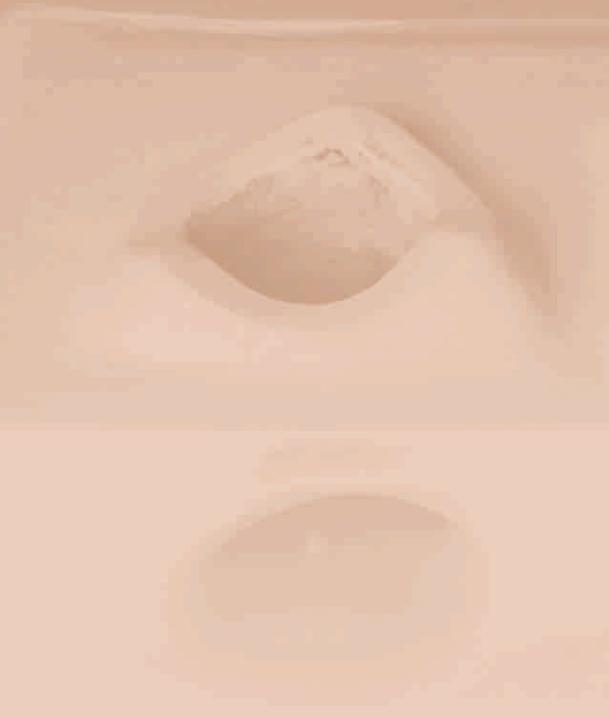




Each Ho village is composed of 2 or 3 hamlets which are known as Tola. The houses in the village are arranged sometimes in a linear fashion but usually sparsely distributed. The Hos generally build a single house in which a partition wall separates the kitchen from the sleeping room. The sleeping room is comparatively bigger than the kitchen. They keep their grain bins in a raised platform in the corner of the sleeping room. The inner side walls of the bed room are attached with a narrow verandah which is used to keep their household articles. In the kitchen room, there is an earthen seat meant for their ancestral spirits (*bura bury*) locally known as *ading*. The people of other communities are strictly prohibited to touch the *ading*. Separate sheds for cows and domesticated animals are built adjacent to the bed room. The *dhenki* or paddy husking lever is installed in one corner of the cattle shed or in a projecting wing of the house. The outer side walls of the house are surrounded by verandah.

The Hos build their houses over a rectangular ground plan with mud walls and their roofs are thatched with straw, grass or tiles. The size of the house varies from 13.5 ft x 7.5 ft. to 25.5 ft x 10.5 ft. They keep their houses very neat and clean. Floors are plastered with the paste of cow dung and mud. The outer side walls of the house are painted with various florals and animals designs. They use various natural or mineral colours like red, yellow, white, etc to make it more attractive. The designs and paintings drawn on their walls are the skilful fine art of their women folk.

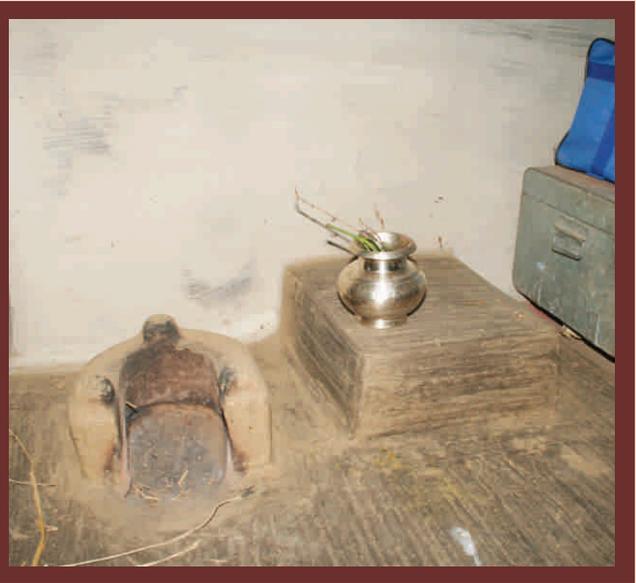




## Household Articles

The household material possessions of the Hos are few. Wooden framed cots woven with thin ropes (*parkam bayar*) and mats made of wild date palm-leaves (*jati*) are used for sleeping purposes. Earthen wares (*chatu*) or aluminum vessels are used for cooking and storing purposes.





Other important articles like broomstick (*jannah*), winnowing fan (*hatau*), pestle, digging stick, axe (*hakeh*), knife, plough (*nayal*), leveler (*kara*), yoke (*nangali*) and straw made bins (*bolah*), etc are also used by the Ho people in their day to day activities. For the purpose of hunting they also keep bow (*aa*), arrow (*sar*), spear (*burchhi*) etc in their house. Besides hunting implements, they also keep various types of fishing traps and nets to catch fish from nearby stream and rivulets.





# Livelihood

The Hos being settled agriculturists, agriculture is the main-stay of their livelihood. Agricultural works mainly start at the advent of rainy season. Ploughing is done only by male folks and other activities like cutting bushes, manuring, weeding, rearing etc; are done by both males and females. They mainly cultivate rice (*baba*), maize and millets (*kadeh*). In addition to this they also grow different types of vegetables like pumpkin (*kakaru*), brinjal (*benga*), pea (*simbali*), onion (*pijaja*), chilli (*malchi*), green leaves (*aa*) etc in the kitchen garden situated very close to their house known as *badi*. They organize most of their socio-economic activities on the basis of mutual help and co-operation.



Other than settled cultivation, they also depend on food gathering, seasonal forest collections, hunting and fishing to supplement their livelihood. They generally collect fuels (*sanance*), sal leaves (*sarajam shakam*), bamboo (*maun*), raisen (*jhuna*), wild potato (*buru sanga*), mushrooms (*uduh*), green leaves (*aah*) mango (*uli*), blackberry (*kudasoo*), date (*khajurijo*), sweet potato (*rauasanga*) etc from the jungle. Some of these items like wild potato, mushroom are used only for consumption. Other items like sal leaves (*sarajama sakam*), raisen (*jhuna*), bamboo (*maun*) etc are sold in the local market to earn money after meeting their consumption needs.





Once upon a time hunting was their principal activity. Since childhood, they observe their parents or seniors while hunting in the forest and gradually after imitation and regular participation they learn the techniques of hunting. At present due to denudation of forest, and imposition of forest laws, the act of hunting has been totally banned for the protection of forests as well as wild species. However, fishing has been continuing as an occasional economic pursuit. They go to nearby streams and rivulets to catch fish.





The Hos being settled agriculturists have great fascination for cattle wealth and domestications of animals. Usually they domesticate cows, bullocks, goats and raise poultry. The cows and bullocks are used for agricultural purposes. It is an exception that they do not consume the milk of cows. Chicken and goats are domesticated not only for consumption but also to be sacrificed before the deities on different rituals and festive occasions.

But now due to industrialization most of the younger generation works as daily wage labourer in mining and factories. Some of them who are educated are also employed in different private and government sectors.



## Food Habits

Rice (*mandi*) is their staple food. In the morning time they prefer to eat watered rice (*daa mandi*) accompanied by fried green leaves, green chillies and salt. For launch as well as in dinner, they usually take boiled rice (*raa-mandi*) with fried green leaves (*aa*), vegetable curry, garlic, onion, chillies, salt and *kachada* oil extracted from *mahua* seeds, etc. They also prefer to eat non-vegetarian items like the curry of fish (*haku*), red ant (*hau*) and termites (*nidri*), crabs (*kattah*), meat (*jilu*) of different types of birds and animals. In past they were consuming beef and pork but now coming in contact with the Hindu neighbors, they are avoiding such foods.

During rituals and festive occasions, they also prepare curry of meat (*jilu*), different types of rice cakes and take these along with boiled rice and country liquor. Like other tribal people, the Hos are also very fond of intoxicating traditional drinks such as rice bear (*handia*), date palm juice (*tadi*) and mahua liquor (*matkamjli rasi*). Such traditional liquors are offered to their ancestors and deities on different festive occasions to appease them. Tobacco leaves (*sukul*) are chewed raw or puffed through handmade cigar (*pica*) by almost all adult members. There is no gender discrimination in smoking or drinking of liquor.

# Social Life

The Ho society is divided into different totemistic and patrilineal clans locally known as '*killi*'. Each clan (*killi*) has a totem and the totemic animal, plant or material object associated with a clan (*killi*) are considered to be sacred. Marriage within the clan is strictly tabooed. After marriage girls are initiated into their husband's clan group. A strong sense of reciprocity and co-operation exists among the clan members as they consider themselves as brothers and sisters. Some of the clans of the Ho tribe are Chatar, Tiria, Gagarai, Saya, Pingua Hemrum etc.

Ho families are patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal. Father is the head of the family who manages all the family affairs in consultation with the grown up members. After the death of father, all the properties are inherited by the sons. The rule of primogeniture exists in their society. Grown-up boys and girls help their parents in domestic as well as outdoor works. Role of mother is also very important in all domestic activities.

In Ho community village is regarded as an important social unit. The families of different clans in the village extend mutual help and co-operation in different socio-religious and economic activities. The villagers share each other's sorrows and happiness at the time of need. Ho society maintains a specific as well as unique system of prescribed rules and regulation for the management of their customary affairs at the tribal, inter-tribal, village and clan levels.



## Life Cycle

### Pregnancy and Child Birth

Birth is considered as an important event in the Ho life cycle. In the Ho society, child birth irrespective of sex of the child is believed to be the outcome of blessings of their supreme deity - Singh Bonga (Sun God). Motherhood is much respected by the Ho and all the family members take special care of the pregnant woman. During pregnancy, a Ho woman has to follow certain taboos and prohibitions regarding her food, drink and mobility. She is prohibited to prepare 'illi', the rice bear and to go outside of the house in the evening time alone.

The delivery of the child is assisted by a midwife who belongs to Ghasi, a Scheduled Caste community. After birth of the child the father of the child arranges a cock fight in the honor of *Singh Bonga*. The family members observe pollution for 8 days. On the 8th day purification ceremony is organized. On this day, they prepare traditional liquor known as 'illi' which is offered to their ancestors for the well being of the child. All the kith and kin are invited to attend the ritual.

Name giving ceremony is conducted on the 21st or 30th day of the birth of the child. The name of the child is given by 'Dehuri' (Priest). A sun dried rice thrown into a pot which contains purified water. Then dried rice is thrown by one by one to the water by uttering the name of their ancestors. While uttering the name of a particular ancestor if the rice touches the first rice it is believed that the same ancestor has been born and the child is given his name. Usually, the name of the first child comes from the paternal ancestors, while the name of the second child comes from maternal ancestors.

The Hos are very affectionate to their children. Early childhood socialization process is taken care of by the mother and other family members whereas peer groups play an important role in the socialization process of late childhood.





## Puberty

For an adolescent girl puberty is an important landmark in her life. When the girl attains her first menarche she has to follow some taboos. She remains in seclusion in an isolated room for seven days. During that period she is tabooed to attain any ritual, to look or talk to any male persons. On the eighth day she takes a purificatory bath anointing oil and turmeric paste and wears new clothes presented by her relatives.



## Marriage

Regarding their marriage they follow clan exogamy. Marriage is strictly prohibited between boys and girls of the same clan and outside their community. Child marriage is not practised. For marriage they give priority to four traditions. Firstly, the groom's side has to pay bride price to the bride's parents. Secondly, the groom puts vermilion on the forehead of the bride. Thirdly, after marriage the newly married couple should attend the ritual known as *jamsing* to appease their ancestors which is held in groom's house. At last a feast is hosted by both groom's side and bride's side respectively to the kith and kin to get social approval.



Marriage by negotiation (*diku andi*) is common among them. However, other types of marriages like marriage by capture (*apartipi*), love marriage (*raji khusi*), and marriage by probation (*anadar*) are practiced. Like other tribes, junior levirate and sororate are also practiced in Ho society.

Marriage by negotiation (*diku andi*) considered to be prestigious is expensive, elaborate and time taking. Preliminary arrangements for this marriage are made by two mediators, one from the bride's side known as *liu* and another from the groom's side known as *dutam karji*. First of all groom's parents visit the bride's home with rice bear (*ili*) to put forth the marriage proposal. If the proposal is accepted a date is fixed by them for negotiation. In this kind of marriage the custom of the bride price (*ganansid*) is prevalent. The groom's party have to pay one cow or calf, one goat or fowl and one hundred rupees as bride price to the bride's parents.

On the wedding day, the groom with his parents and relatives reach at the bride's house in a procession. The *dehuri* (priest) conducts the wedding rites in the name of *sing bonga* by uttering rhymes for the well being of the newly married couple. After that the groom moves around the bride for seven times by



holding a knife and at last puts vermillion mark on the forehead of the bride. It signifies that he will protect that girl from all crises. The bride's party hosts a feast for the kith and kin. Next day the bride is led to the groom's house. The mother-in-law of the bride welcomes the newly married couple. Then the bride enters into the kitchen and seeks the blessings from *ading* (ancestors). This practice is called as *jamsing*. The groom's family also hosts a marriage feast to all kinsfolk, guests, and relatives.

## Divorce

In Ho society divorce (*bagi*) is permitted under certain grounds. The wife claims divorce for the reason of maladjustment in conjugal life, cruelty, extra-marital relationship, alcoholism, poor maintenance etc. Likewise the husband can divorce the wife on the reasons of impotency or



barrenness and extra-marital relationship. The dispute of divorce cases are adjudicated by the traditional village chief. He is also assisted by four to five elderly members of the village. Also the village chief of the bride is invited to attend the meeting. After divorce is sanctioned, the groom's parents have to pay back the bride price to the bride but if the wife is found to be guilty the groom has to return half of the bride price. But if the wife divorces the husband, there will be no repayment of bride price.

## Death

Depending upon the nature of death, the corpse may be cremated or buried. In case of unnatural deaths due to snake bite, suicide, small pox, drowning in water or the attack of the wild animals etc, the corpses are buried but the dead bodies of persons having normal death are burnt. It is an exception that in the Ho society the women participate in carrying the corpse to the cremation ground. The wife, daughter or unmarried sister sets fire to the corpse. On next day charred bones are collected from the cremation ground which is kept hanging from the roof in a corner of the sleeping room.

The pollution period is observed by all the lineage members for 21 days. The purificatory rite or *kamini* is observed on the 21st day of death. The kith and kin are invited. All the clan members cut their hair, pair their nails and take a purificatory bath. To appease the ancestors magico-religious performances are performed by the *dehuri* (priest) who digs a pit in the graveyard and burys the bones of the deceased kept in the sleeping room. Apart from this ritual, feast and drink are also the major activities in this ritual. They also call upon the spirit of the deceased to take shelter in adding the seat for their ancestors in the kitchen. In all festive occasions the ancestors are worshipped for their well being.

# Religious Beliefs & Practices

The Hos are polytheists. Being the worshiper of nature, they believe in *sarna* religion. The word *sarna* is derived from the word *sir* which means 'arrow'. The Ho religion resembles, to a great extent to that of Santal, Oraon and Munda. *Bonga* is the generic term which is used to signify all gods / goddesses and spirits.

Sing Bonga or Sun God is their supreme deity. They believe that he is the creator of the universe. They also worship Marangburu or Baru Bonga the goddess of hill for the arrival of rains. There are other deities like Paudi turudu bonga the god of deep water, Bagiya bonga the god of forest who controls all the wild animals, *Ikir bonga* the deity of river, Sangar bonga the god of hunting, Sana turudu bonga the god of wealth, Jid Bonga Kumuba bonga, Bhata bonga, Hankar bonga etc. who are worshipped by the Ho people on different festive occasions and also at the time of crises.

At the village outskirts, lies their sacred grove (*saran*) where their village deity Desauli resides. Desauli protects all the villagers from different crises. Therefore, most of the community rituals are performed at *sarna* in the honor of the village deity.

The religious head of the Ho society is known as *dehuri/deuri*, who mediates between *hor* (man) and *bonga* (god). He officiates as a priest in all the village or community level rituals. His position is hereditary. Sometimes he is assisted by *Jamsim*.

The Hos have a strong belief in witchcraft. They believe that the continuation of any kind of disease for a longtime is due to the action of Dian (witch) or evil *bonga*. The Dians are generally elderly women of their society. Irrespective of any age group, one can learn the *dian bidya* (the technique of witch craft). Sometime they are supposed to have intercourse with malevolent spirits to acquire the evil power to bring any type of natural calamity to their region or to harm or kill their enemies.





Whenever the Ho people suffer from any disease they usually consult the *ojha* or *denova* (Shaman), who acts as the traditional magico-religious healer. In trance he can detect the cause of illness, and prescribes remedies to the patient through performing magico-religious activities.

### **Festivals**

The Hos are settled agriculturists. As such most of their festivals revolve around various agricultural activities. Mage parab is the principal festival of the tribe. It is celebrated in the month of Magha (January- February) when the granaries are full of paddy. For welfare of the villagers the Hos worship Sing bonga and Desauli along with some other *bongas* during this festival. It continues for six days. According to the nature of celebration, each day of the festival is named separately, like (i) Gawamara or Gawal (2) Ote Ili or Ate Ili (3) Loya or Sange illi (4) Marringpar or Marring Musing (5) Basi Para or Mage Basi or Basi Musing (6) Hanr Mage or Hanr Bonga or Hanr Bagia.

Baha Parab is another important festival of the Ho tribe. In Ho language, 'Ba' means flower and thus the festival is named. It is clear that this festival is related to the flower, particularly the indigenous sal flower. This festival is also known as Phal Bhangani and celebrated in the month of Chaitra (February-March) in honour of the village deity, Desauli.

Rajasala or Raja Parab is also observed by the Ho people which comes during the Yethe-Chanda (May-June). Dancing and singing in groups are the major events of this festival. Besides, other festivals like, Hero Parab, Bantauli Parab, Kamnawa Parab and Kaka Montari or Kalam Parab, etc; are also observed by Ho people on different occasions. But now after coming in contact with the Hindu castes, some of them also observe different Hindu festivals, like Laxmi Puja, Durga Puja, Biswakarma Puja, Ganesh Puja, Saraswati Puja and Ratha Yatra (Car Festival) etc.

# Dance and Music

Dance (*susun*) and music are the integral part of all the festivals and rituals observed by the Ho community. Besides, in their leisure time they perform various dances for entertainment. In Ho society dance is a group affair. There is a great similarity in the music, songs and dances of the Hos with other neighbouring tribes such as the Kol, the Munda, the Santal and the Birhor. The principal varieties of dances they perform are *maghe susun* on the occasion of Maghe festival, *ba susun* in Ba festival, *andi susun* on the occasion of marriage and hero *susun* during the Hero festival. Each dance is accompanied by a song, which is sung by the performers. Irrespective of age and sex all can dance and invariably sing but the accompanying music is provided by only male members. For dance and music they use different type of musical instruments like *dama* (single membrane drum), *dumang* (double membrane drum), *rutu* (flute), *banam* (one stringed fiddle), *chadchadi* (single membrane drum), *ghanta* (iron bell) etc.







The rich tradition of dance and music has been developed indigenously and maintained by themselves without any external help. Now-a-days, with the aid of the government and various non-governmental organizations they perform their dance and music in different district, state and national level festivals to exhibit their artistic talents and cultural identity.



# Social Control

Traditionally, the Ho people had a well-organized autonomous socio-political system. Their traditional governance system was a three-tier system such as village council at the bottom, regional council in the middle, and tribal council at the top. All the household heads are the member of the village council headed by the secular village head known as Munda who is nominated by the family heads of the village. He is assisted by an assistant called Dakua. Munda is the adjudicator of all cases in the village council.

At the regional level the confederation of some adjacent villages is called *pirh*. The head of the *pirh* is called as Manki who is nominated by the Mundas of the component villages. He presides over the *pirh* meetings where inter village disputes are resolved. Several *pirhs* constitute the apex organization called *pala*. Bisoi is the secular head of *pala* nominated by the Mankis of the constituent *pirhs*. Their customary matters which could not be resolved at the regional level and so referred to this apex body are discussed and finalized at this level.

But now it is seen that only the traditional village council is still effective. With the introduction of new panchayatiraj institution the traditional middle and upper level councils have lost their importance. Even now, the Munda, the secular head of the village handles their customary affairs and settles all the disputes regarding theft, conflicts, violation of customary rules, witchcraft and sorcery, partition of property, sale and mortgage of land, marriage, bride price, divorce, adultery and the like. Munda presides over the village council meeting, initiates discussions and take decisions in consultation with Dakua and other village elders.

Punishment given to the offender also varies considering the gravity of the offence. Generally the offender is asked to pay in shape of kind or cash. Sometimes depending upon the gravity of offence the culprit is ex-communicated.

# Change and Development

In recent decades the Ho society is undergoing rapid change and lying in a stage of transition which is reflected in their changing life style and cultural pattern. Special developmental plans and programmes, lunched by Government and non-government agencies for their economic upliftment have contributed a lot in their transformation.

Introduction of modern agriculture, provision of irrigation facility, input assistance and market support for disposal of surplus have brought visible changes in their agricultural sector. By occupational diversification now most of the younger generations are gainfully engaged in mining and industries, civil construction works as wage earners because the native place of Ho, i.e. Mayurbhanj district of Odisha is endowed with rich mineral deposits and forest resources. Some of them have also entered into institutional service as well as other service sectors.

Under various socio-economic development schemes, Self Help Groups have been formed and they have got the opportunity to avail different kinds of financial benefits to improve their living standards by adopting gainful pursuits like fishery, poultry, horticulture, etc. By developing cottage industry they also prepare broomsticks, pickles, leaf plates and turmeric powder and sell in the local market to earn additional income.





Education is the prime input as well as indicator of development. The ST and SC Development Department of Odisha Government has been taking significant steps to spread education among the tribes including the Hos. Different categories of schools like Ekalavya Model Residential Schools, Higher Secondary Schools, High Schools, Girls High School, Ashram Schools, Sevashram Schools, Secondary Teacher Training Schools invariably with residential facilities along with the provisions of stipend, mid-day meals, free text books, reading and writing materials, school uniforms and bi-cycles are running in their areas. This endeavor has resulted in noticeable improvement in the level of literacy and education of the tribe.

Due to introduction of the reservation policy, PESA, (Panchayatraj Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act and Forest Rights (FR) Act in their area, their traditional rights to self-governance and development and exploitation of forest resources have been recognized and these have contributed to their empowerment. Further, several protective and promotional measures provided by the constitution and subsequent legislations accompanied by a host of welfare and development plans and programmes have helped them to proceed towards their integration in the

national mainstream in a footing of equality

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRI) and ST & SC Development Department have undertaken initiatives to expose and develop traditional skills of arts and crafts of different tribes including the Ho. Live Demonstrations Programmes are being organized in the premises of Tribal Museum of SCSTRI where their arts and artifacts have been preserved and exhibited for the domestic and foreign visitors, there by opening an window to their unique cultural landmarks. Every year National Tribal Dance Festival in December and Annual State Level Tribal Fair (Adivasi Mela) are being organized at the State capital of Bhubaneswar to exhibit the colourful and diversified arts, crafts, musics, songs, dances and other non-material and material aspects of the tribal world of Odisha in which the Ho artists and artisans are participating. However, while facing the powerful waves of modernization and development, the Hos are struggling hard to preserve the time-tested indigenous elements of their pristine culture as well as their cultural identity against letting them to be lost in antiquity.





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